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ABSTRACT

This book presents case studies of six "pockets of hope," democratic educational projects in which empowered students and their teachers actively engage with relevant academic and social problems. Although seemingly very different, the projects share a core commitment to democratic pedagogy and demonstrate practices consistent with Freirean or feminist theory. An introduction discusses current conservative efforts to undo the democratic progress made in education during the 1950s-70s by dismantling public education; presents a typology of how power operates in schools and the world, and points out how the teachers and students studied clearly understand this typology; and describes key characteristics of democratic education (central role of the democratic teacher, sense of community, relevance, dialogue, and collaborative construction of knowledge). The cases are: (1) the Language Intensive Interdisciplinary Program at Salem State College (Massachusetts), which brought together international students and previously marginalized immigrant students; (2) Hawaii's Peer Education Program, providing peer education and mediation as well as lessons in state politics; (3) Project 10 East, a gay-straight alliance to create a safe school environment for all students at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School (Massachusetts); (4) Aloha 'Aina (love for the land), a special education science program for primarily Native Hawaiian students to reclaim a bombed-out island and renew Hawaiian culture; (5) the Appalachian Mountain Teen Project (New Hampshire), empowering poor rural youth through outdoor adventure experiences, community service projects, and family mentoring; and (6) the work of Helen Lewis of Highlander Research and Education Center, offering popular education to support community action in Appalachia and the South. (Contains 57 references.) (SV)

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